

Statement of regret

The Reformed Churches and the Anabaptist movement are all essentially branches on one and the same bough of the great Christian tree. Both are offsprings of the Reformation. Right from the start however they went their separate ways, so that a tragic rift ran through the Zurich Reformation, painful traces of which are discernable to this day. Executions, persecution and expulsions were carried out to eliminate the Anabaptist movement. Yet it has survived and is still flourishing today. The descendants of those early Anabaptists are a living testimony to this.

The persecuted do not forget their history; the persecutors by contrast would prefer to do so. We - representatives of the Reformed State Church of the Canton of Zurich - acknowledge that our church has largely suppressed the story of the persecution of the Anabaptists.

We confess that the persecution was, according to our present conviction, a betrayal of the Gospel and that our Reformed forefathers were in error on this issue.

We affirm that the judgement against the Anabaptists in the Second Helvetic Confession, which discards the teaching of the Anabaptists as unbiblical and refuses any communion with them, is no longer valid for us and that it is now our earnest desire to discover and strengthen our common ties.

We acknowledge the faithful of the Anabaptist tradition as our sisters and brothers and their churches as part of the body of Christ, whose diverse members are united through the Spirit of God.

We honour the radical approach of the Anabaptist movement to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world as a free community of committed believers putting into practice the message of the Sermon on the Mount.

It is time to accept the history of the Anabaptist movement as part of our own, to learn from the Anabaptist tradition and to strengthen our mutual testimony through dialogue.

Following the example of our reformed tradition, *we confess*:

We do not belong to ourselves. We belong to Jesus Christ who calls us to follow him and to be reconciled with those brothers and sisters who have any just reasons to reproach us.

We do not belong to ourselves. We belong to Jesus Christ who reconciles us with God through his death on the cross and has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation.

We do not belong to ourselves. We belong to Jesus Christ who tore down the wall of enmity and united people near and far in one body.